

MISCELLANEOUS.

SPADIX PURPUREA, GOSSE.

To the Editors of the *Annals of Natural History*.

Falmouth, September 30, 1853.

GENTLEMEN, — The *Spadix purpurea*, Gosse (*Arum Cocksii*, Vigurs; vide Report of the Royal Polytechnic Society, 1849) is an old friend of mine, having found it in the autumn of 1844, attached to the under surface of a large stone, extreme low water mark, spring tide, Gwyllyn-vase, in the neighbourhood. Since that period a great number of specimens have been sent to some of the first-class naturalists of the age, in this country, on the continent, and in America, but hitherto it has proved an enigma not easily solved. In the year 1847 Mr. J. Alder sent several from Falmouth to the Members of the Natural-History Section, British Association, and specimens alive were forwarded, per post, to Sir G. Dalyell, but unfortunately death terminated the career of this good and great man before he had time to untie the Gordian knot. I am glad that another habitat has been found for this interesting creature. I have repeatedly produced the young from the ova; they are free for several days, and perambulate on their stilt-like legs with ease and agility.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

W. P. COCKS.

Note on the Parasitism of Comandra umbellata, Nutt.

By ASA GRAY.

So long ago as the year 1847, Mr. William Mitten, an English botanist, communicated to Hooker's London Journal of Botany (vol. vi. p. 146. pl. 4) a brief article, on the œconomy of the roots of *Thesium linophyllum*; in which he shows that the roots of this plant are parasitic; the ramifications of the root forming attachments, by means of suckers, with the roots of adjacent plants of various species. The same parasitism probably occurs in other species of *Thesium*, if not in the genus generally. But I am not aware that the fact has been confirmed on the continental species, which are somewhat numerous, although attention has been called to the subject by the reprint of Mr. Mitten's article in the 'Annales des Sciences Naturelles' (in the volume which bears the nominal date of 1847), and an interesting extension was at once given to the discovery by M. Decaisne, who detected a similar parasitic attachment of the rootlets of *Melampyrum*, *Pedicularis*, and other rhinanthaceous plants long known to be uncultivable.

In the Botanical Text-book, I had called attention to the related genus *Comandra*, which replaces *Thesium* in this country, as likely to exhibit the same parasitic œconomy, but, pressed by other occupations, had neglected to make the examination myself; nor had I any notice of the observation having been made by others, although *Comandra umbellata* is everywhere a common plant in the United States.